

patches of a square metre in Crete or Spain, or surveying thousands of square kilometres of La Mancha from space. Long-continued, consistent effort is evidently needed, requiring the involvement of government establishments as well as (and collaborating with) 'spray and catch' researchers and remote sensors.

Dregne's contribution is a remarkable one. He was of course responsible for many of the UNEP pronouncements 20 years ago. Now he recommends a framework for control based on the ease with which it can be accomplished. Don't bother with the 3.5 billion ha where rainfall is less than

200mm – unless it can be irrigated. Poor developing countries should forget about desertification and concentrate on intensifying production on their best land. See how this policy has solved the problems of the American south and western Europe, shifting production to the most stable landscapes where the land degradation threat is minimal. He might have got it right this time.

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THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA edited by William M. Adams, Andrew S. Goudie and Anthony R. Orme, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996. No. of pages: xxii+429. Price: £48 hardback. ISBN 0-19-828875-1.

This nicely produced volume doubles as the first in a new series on regional environments published by OUP and, more importantly, as a tribute to the work on African Geography by Dick Grove, and his impact on this field. Most, if not all, of the contributors were students or colleagues of Grove; the breadth of the book's content gives testimony to the influence he has exerted on those investigating the complex physical geography of African environments. It also demonstrates the diversity of his interests, from long-term climatic change to contemporary human-environment issues.

When I was an undergraduate, it was Grove's 1969 paper 'Landforms and climatic change in the Kalahari and Ngamiland', published in the *Geographical Journal*, that made me realize that scientific geography was more than simply the tedium of erosion plots, and that a full understanding of physical systems necessitated not only the study of process but of change too. Unlike many others researching climatic change at that time, Grove avoided over-generalizations and went for careful measurement and description leading to detailed analysis and interpretation. In many ways, such an approach is followed in this volume, where a big topic (a whole continent) is summarized, but in a manner that is simultaneously succinct yet avoids unhelpful, excessive generalization. For a volume consisting of 21 chapters written by 19 authors, there is considerable

coherence, reflecting both the triumvirate editorial skills and perhaps also Grove's lasting influence on his former pupils and colleagues.

Like Grove's own *Changing Geography of Africa* (1989), a regional approach is eschewed in favour of a thematic analysis. Five chapters on the long-term evolution and climate of Africa, including recent climatic variability, are followed by 12 dealing with either core landscape components (e.g. lakes, soils, biogeography) or environmental categories (e.g. forest, desert, wetland). The four final chapters cover vital aspects of human-environment interactions: soil erosion, desertification, biodiversity and biodepletion, and conservation and development. There are no dud chapters, though a few could have benefited by slightly more detailed coverage. The chapters on tectonics and long-term landscape development, climate, environmental change in the historical period, savannas, coasts, wetlands, soil erosion, and conservation and development are examples of those that are especially good. Illustrations are excellent, particularly some of the maps and diagrams, which will make an excellent teaching resource, and the index is thorough. The book commences with a summary, by Claudio Vita-Finzi, of Dick Grove's academic career, which throughout has been based at Cambridge University. It is therefore ironic that this volume, dedicated to his career, should be published by Oxford University Press.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS: ASSESSING RISK AND REDUCING DISASTER (second edition) by K. Smith, Routledge, London and New York, 1996. No. of pages: xxiii+389. Price: £17.99 (pb). ISBN 041512203 1, 041512204 x.

The first edition of this book was undoubtedly one of the best introductory texts in the field (Alexander, 1993). The author has made a substantial revision, adding over 60 pages of text, although the major chapter headings are recognizable from the earlier edition. The most significant changes have been made in Chapter 2 (Dimensions of Disaster), Chapter 3 (Risk

Assessment and Management), Chapter 4 (Accepting and Sharing Losses), Chapter 8 (Mass Movement Hazards), Chapter 10 (Biophysical Hazards), Chapter 11 (Floods), Chapter 12 (Droughts), Chapter 13 (Technological Hazards) and Chapter 14 (Conclusion). Amongst the new section headings are: auditing disaster, risk communication, risk management, landslide hazards, biophysical hazards, epidemics, loss sharing, event and vulnerability modification of droughts, the significance of technological hazards, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and Beyond the International Decade. These topics were either ignored or discussed only briefly in the first edition. It is thus a major revision, which warrants the purchase of at least a